



PREVENTION OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE BIG SKY

Breathing Easier in Big Sky Country: Montanans Support the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act

Secondhand smoke contains numerous toxins, of which more than 50 compounds are known human carcinogens.¹ Exposure to secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, increases the risk of cardiovascular disease by 25-30%, sudden infant death syndrome, and low birth weight.² Exposure to secondhand smoke for as few as 30 minutes creates vascular changes in the body, which can lead to an increased risk of heart attack.³ Strikingly, exposure to secondhand smoke accounts for an estimated 50,000 deaths annually in the United States -- about one nonsmoker death for every eight smoking attributable deaths among smokers.⁴ In 2006, the Surgeon General reported that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that eliminating indoor tobacco smoke is the only way fully to protect nonsmokers.² Laws mandating smoke-free public places have shown an average 19% (95% confidence interval [CI] 14%-24%) reduction in acute myocardial infarction in the United States, Italy, and Ireland.⁵

The Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) is a state law to protect all Montanans from the hazards of secondhand tobacco smoke exposure in all enclosed public places. Since 2005, most Montana work places and public places, including restaurants, have been free of tobacco smoke. On October 1, 2009, all Montana bars, taverns, and casinos will also be smoke-free under this law. This issue of *Montana Public Health* describes the high level of support Montanans have reported for clean indoor air.

The Montana Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program annually conducts the Montana Adult Tobacco Survey, a population-based telephone survey of Montana adults assessing trends in tobacco use and attitudes. Participants were selected anonymously through random-digit dialing. More than 2,500 Montanans participated in the 2008 survey.⁶

Montana Clean Indoor Air Act The overwhelming majority of Montanans (95%; 95% CI 92%-97%) are aware that secondhand smoke is harmful to one's health. Support for the MCIAA as it applies to restaurants has increased from 80% (95% CI 76-84%) in 2005 to 89% (95% CI 85%-92%) in 2008 (Figure). Support is similarly strong by gender and age (Table). However, support varies significantly by smoking status. Nonsmokers are nearly six times more likely to support this portion of the law than are smokers (odds ratio [OR] = 5.8; 95% CI 2.7-12.4).

Since 2005, support has also grown for the law as it will apply to bars, taverns and casinos; 75% (95% CI 70%-79%) of Montanans currently approve of this portion of the law (Figure). This support is similar by gender and age (Table). However, support varies by smoking status and race: white nonsmokers are ten times more likely to approve than are white smokers (OR = 10.2; 95% CI 4.2, 24.4) and American Indian nonsmokers are six times more likely to approve than are American Indian smokers (OR = 6.4; 95% CI 1.2, 34.4).

Figure. Percent of adults supporting the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act in restaurants and bars, taverns, and casinos, Montana Adult Tobacco Survey, 2005-2008.

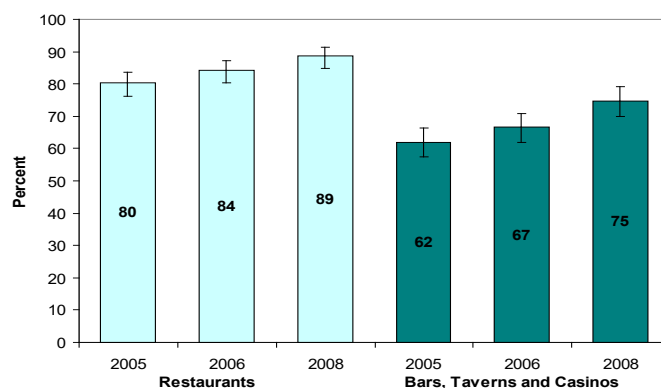


Table. Percent of adults supporting the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act in restaurants and bars, taverns and casinos, by gender and age, Montana Adult Tobacco Survey, 2008

	Restaurants % (95% CI)	Bars, Taverns, and Casinos % (95% CI)
Total	89 (85-92)	75 (70-79)
Gender		
Men	86 (80-91)	70 (62-77)
Women	91(86-94)	80 (74-84)
Age group		
18-24	91 (75-97)	72 (51-86)
25-34	83 (63-93)	63 (45-78)
35-54	90 (84-93)	77 (71-83)
55-65	89 (82-93)	75 (67-83)
65+	90 (84-94)	82 (74-88)

Montanans Still Exposed to Secondhand Smoke The MCIAA is a historic public health policy that protects nearly all Montanans from the dangerous health effects of secondhand smoke in workplaces and indoor public places. However, thousands of nonsmokers in Montana are still exposed to secondhand smoke at home and in vehicles. An estimated 33,000 adult nonsmokers (4%; 95 CI 3%-7%) are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and an estimated 52,000 adult nonsmokers (7%; 95 CI 5%-11%) are exposed in vehicles. Given the overwhelming evidence documenting the deleterious effects of secondhand smoke, the challenge remains to eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke for all Montanans. The full implementation of the MCIAA on October 1, 2009

will mark a major milestone in controlling one of the greatest public health problems of our time.



Recommendations to eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke:

- All Montana workplaces and indoor public places should be smoke-free. Montanans are strongly encouraged to avoid **all places** where smoking occurs; particularly persons in high risk groups, including: infants and children, and adults diagnosed with asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Health care professionals should advise and provide support for cessation options such as the free Montana Quit Line for their patients who use tobacco. Quitting not only improves the smoker's health but also protects the health of nonsmoking family members and friends.
- Citizens are encouraged to thank their legislators for supporting the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act.

For more information about the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, contact Laura L. Biazzo, MPH, Epidemiologist/Program Evaluator at (406) 444-0064 or lbiazzo@mt.gov or visit <http://tobaccofree.mt.gov>

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